

March 7, 2022

Dear Members of the Joint Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

I am writing in support of [S.B. NO.17 - An Act Prohibiting an Institution of Higher Education from Withholding Transcripts](#). Withholding transcripts or transcript ransom prevents students from registering for classes, transferring credits, and obtaining employment.

Colleges and universities use transcript ransom as a debt collection measure. These debts are usually under \$5,000 and are typically the result of last-minute graduation fees, room and board, lab fees, and other university costs. **This practice disproportionately harms low-income students, students of color, and first-generation students.** Transcript ransom penalizes those without financial resources for doing exactly what we as a society have told them to do in order to succeed – attend college. So those, through lottery of birth, who do not have families/other support systems who can cover such costs face even more difficulty moving forward because they are unable to formally show other educational institutions or employers that they, in fact, earned college credit and/or completed a degree.

We need to take action on this issue and you have the opportunity to do so today. Please center Connecticut students and graduates and support SB. NO.17 to protect and support CT students and graduates who need it. I commend the committee for introducing such a necessary bill. We are especially grateful for the leadership of Senator Lesser, Representatives Turco, Paris and Kavros Degraw on student debt related issues.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sara Armstrong  
New Haven, Connecticut